

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 COME-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00  
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 XMB-02 FRB-03  
IO-13 OMB-01 OPIC-03 /115 W  
-----022176 142313Z /62

P R 142235Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9928  
INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
AMEMBASSY MEXICO  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA  
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ  
USINTSEC HAVANA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 2248

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, BH, UK, GT  
SUBJ: BELIZE: VIEWS OF VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT

1. SUMMARY: VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT VILLAGRAN, WHO APPEARS DESTINED TO PLAY IMPORTANT ROLE IN MOLDING FOREIGN POLICY OF THE LUCAS ADMINISTRATION, IS CLEARLY ATTRACTED BY IDEA OF RESOLVING THE BELIZE ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF WIDER CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PARTICIPATION. ALTHOUGH HIS IDEAS ON A SETTLEMENT FORMULA SEEM TO DIFFER LITTLE FROM WHAT THE PRICE GOVERNMENT HAS THUS FAR REJECTED, HIS NON-DOCTRINAIRE APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT IS ENCOURAGING. END SUMMARY

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2. DURING TOUR D'HORIZON APRIL 13 AMBASSADOR ASKED VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT FRANCISCO VILLAGRAN KRAMER WHETHER HIS THINKING ABOUT BELIZE HAD ADVANCED BEYOND VIEWS HE HAD EXPRESSED TO US AT THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR. VILLAGRAN INDICATED THAT THE IDEA OF MULTILATERALIZING THE BELIZE CONVERSATIONS WAS STILL VERY ATTRACTIVE TO HIM. HE IMPLIED THAT IN THIS HE HAD THE SUPPORT OF PRESIDENT-ELECT LUCAS. ENVISIONING A POST-INAUGURAL NEGOTIATING ROUND IN WHICH GUATEMALA,

BELIZE AND THE UK WOULD BE JOINED BY THE ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEANS AND THE OTHER CENTRAL AMERICA COUNTRIES, HE REASONED THAT ALL HAD AN INTEREST IN THE OUTCOME AND WOULD BE GETTING INTO THE ACT REGARDLESS. ASKED HOW HE SAW MEXICO'S ROLE, VILLAGRAN REPLIED THAT BOTH MEXICO AND CUBA REPRESENTED DELICATE PROBLEMS. MEXICO HAD A RIGHT TO BE THERE AT LEAST IN SOME SORT OF OBSERVER STATUS, BUT HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT AN INVITATION TO THE CUBANS WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE SINCE THEY HAVE NO DIRECT INTEREST IN THE DISPUTE AND BECAUSE THE OTHER CENTRAL AMERICANS WOULD NOT BE AMENABLE. THE CORE OF VILLAGRAN'S VISION IS AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE, ASSOCIATED WITH THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMON MARKET AS GREECE IS TO THE EEC, ACTING AS A PIVOT FOR VASTLY INCREASED INTERACTION BETWEEN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN. HE NOTED THAT COSTA RICA HAD ALREADY TAKEN INITIATIVES IN THAT DIRECTION.

3. VILLAGRAN SEEMED COMFORTABLE WITH THE DISCUSSED MOHO RIVER/SOUTHERN CAYS BOUNDARY. HE BELIEVED PRICE MIGHT FIND THIS ACCEPTABLE IF GUATEMALA WERE TO THROW IN A COMMITMENT TO REQUIRE JOINT EXPLOITATION OF MINERAL RESOURCES (E.E., OIL) IN THE CEDED AREA. GUATEMALA COULD ALSO SET UP A FINANCIAL TRUST IN A BELIZEAN BANK IN "TOLEDO DISTRICT" TO PROVIDE LOANS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE NEW BOUNDARY, PREFERENCE TO BE GIVEN TO PERSONS OF KEKCHI INDIAN AND CARIB BACKGROUND (GROUPS WHICH SPAN THE PRESENT GUATEMALA/BELIZE BOUNDARY). VILLAGRAN ALSO RAISED THE PROSPECT OF A "SELF DETERMINATION" PLEBISCITE AFTER SOME YEARS (WHETHER IN ALL TOLEDO DISTRICT OR JUST THE CEDED TERRITORY WAS NOT CLEAR). WHATEVER  
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SETTLEMENT FORMULA IS REACHED COULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE GUATEMALAN AND BELIZEAN PEOPLES IN SIMULTANEOUS REFERENDA.

4. VILLAGRAN GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF A CERTAIN URGENCY IN GETTING THE TALKS MOVING AGAIN IMMEDIATELY AFTER LUCAS' INAUGURATION. HE PROFESSED TO BELIEVE THAT PRICE WAS UNDER PRESSURE TO ANNOUNCE INDEPENDENCE PLANS IN SEPTEMBER DURING HIS ST GEORGE'S DAY SPEECH.

5. VILLAGRAN CONFIRMED HE HAD MET RECENTLY WITH TORRIJOS ABOUT BELIZE AND SAID HE FOUND THE LATTER SYMPATHETIC TO HIS IDEAS. VILLAGRAN HOPED TO SOUND OUT PRESIDENT PEREZ NEXT WEEK DURING A VACATION STOP-OVER IN VENEZUELA.

6. COMMENT: WE DO NOT HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT VILLAGRAN HAS BEEN BRIEFED DEEPLY BY THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AS YET. A NUMBER OF HIS IDEAS ON TERMS OF SETTLEMENT ARE OLD HAT IN ONE OR ANOTHER FORM (E.G., ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, EVENUTAL PLEBISCITE, LINKAGES WITH THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMON MARKET, SHARING OF OIL RESOURCES) AND HAVE NOT BEEN ENOUGH TO OVERCOME BELIZEAN RESISTANCE TO A SETTLEMENT BASED ON A TERRITORIAL TRANSACTION. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS ENCOURAGING TO SEE THIS AMOUNT OF PRAGMATISM AND WILLINGNESS TO INNOVATE FROM A MAN WHO SEEMS DESTINED TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THE FORMULATION OF

THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO BELIZE.  
BOSTER

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## Message Attributes

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